

From the Elm to the Church – How Space Influences Sandy’s Identity Construction

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Abstract: Muriel Spark depicts a unique image of teacher in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* with the character of Jean Brodie, utilizing the change in teacher-student relationship between Miss Brodie and her student, Sandy, as a cue for identity construction of the latter. This thesis intends to adopt Henry Lefebvre’s space theory to analyze this relationship and Sandy’s growth from the spatial perspective, discussing the active role played by space in the establishment of hegemony. Spark cares about the suffering among hypocrisy and autocracy in the special geographical space of Edinburgh and points out a tough but promising way for the strugglers.

Keywords: Space triad, alienation, identity construction, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*.

1. Introduction

Muriel Spark was a prolific and talented Scottish female writer who began to write in the 1940s. Her masterpieces impressed the world and she was conferred Dame of the British Empire for her great achievements. Out of her many works, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* is a most famous novel and was first published in *The New Yorker* magazine in 1961.

This novel tells a story of a schoolteacher whose name is Jean Brodie and her Brodie set composed of six girls who have been chosen from the crowd and Miss Brodie means to mold into “the crème de la crème”. However, what she does goes against what she preaches with respect to education. In the end, her expectations are failed and she herself is betrayed by Sandy who realizes the negative influence Miss Brodie has imposed on them and takes vengeance. The uncertain, suspense, conflict and artistic appeal of this novel attracts many researchers.

It is noticeable that in the novel, spaces change as time passes by, and the main character, Sandy’s opinions on Miss Brodie and her own identity also change accordingly. Currently, little has been done to study the relationship between space changes and identity construction. Existent research mainly focuses on topics like education, narrative strategy, religion and duality. There are essays probing into the spaces in the novel but most of them analyze the narrative skills in the switch of diverse spaces.

This thesis intends to apply Henry Lefebvre’s theory about space triad to analyze the space changes in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* and how these influence Sandy’s identity construction.

Henry Lefebvre, a French philosopher, is a staunch Marxist thinker who constructed the theory of space and pioneered the contemporary Western Neo-Marxist school of spatial geography. He proposed that space is not an abstract natural substance, but the interweaving and concretization of social relations, “a means of production” and “a means of control, and hence of domination, of power” (*The Production of Space* 26). In his view, space is produced by social action and is essentially some kind of social production. Human production practice determines that the space also features social practice. Based on this, Lefebvre proposed the famous “spatial triad” theory, including three key concepts,

“representation of space”, “spatial practice” and “representational space”.

Space research in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* brings more attention to the interaction between humans and spaces, discerning knowledge of different types and probing into the relationship between space, knowledge and power. Research studying Sandy’s growth has been a lot, but little analyzes the influence imposed by the spaces. This thesis can shed light on the inner subjective development of the whole story.

2. Hegemony and Identity Alienation

The space triad theory starts from man’s social practice. Spatial practice “embraces production and reproduction, and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation” (*The Production of Space* 33). Man creates space with their actual perceptual activity. “This kind of activity, ranging from producing to living, theories to practice, determines the formation, structure, function, meaning and extension of the space” (Qiang, 2023).

Representations of space are “tied to the relations of production and to the ‘order’ which those relations impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, to codes, and to ‘frontal’ relations” (*The Production of Space* 33). Representation of space are imagined and hence not real. Existing only in man’s mind, they are some unspoken rules and standards about a certain space and are what humans expect the spaces to be. On the other hand, representational spaces, embodying complex symbolisms, sometimes coded, sometimes not, are linked to “the clandestine or underground side of social life, as also to art” (33). Put in other words, representational spaces refer to the real world that mans are experiencing.

There are many spaces in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, and a most important one is the big elm in the garden under which Miss Brodie gives lectures to the Brodie set. Analyzing the three spatial attributes of this space not only further explains space triad theory in actual appliance, but also lays fundamental basis for later discussion about hegemony and alienation in spaces.

In this case, the teaching activity, which is one type of social practice, creates this unique social space, discerning it from the background. Representations of space refer to the orders that the girls as students ought to obey and are just a set of codes in their minds, imaginary and not real. Meanwhile,

representational spaces refer to the real space that they are experiencing. This space consists of complex symbolisms, some coded, some not. For example, the fallen leaves, grass, the tree and so on are coded symbolisms. Other things or material which can't be named or can hardly be realized are regarded as uncoded but substantial symbolisms.

2.1. Miss Brodie's Hegemony

With space comes "the hegemony of one class". When it comes to whether the exercise of hegemony might leave space untouched, Lefebvre's answer is "no". Space can't be nothing more than the passive locus of social relations, the milieu in which their combination takes on body, or the aggregate of the procedures employed in their removal. Lefebvre emphasizes "the active - the operational or instrumental - role of space as knowledge and action, in the existing mode of production" and shows "how space serves, and how hegemony makes use of it" in the establishment of a "system" when knowledge and technical expertise are applied on the basis of an underlying logic (*The Production of Space* 11).

With space triad, Lefebvre distinguishes between two types of knowledge, savior and *connaissance*. Savior refers to the established knowledge while *connaissance* is obtained from real-life experience. Savior "colludes to some degree with power" and "is bound up, whether crudely or more subtly, with political practice – and hence with the multifarious representations and rhetoric of ideology" (*The Production of Space* 367).

The ruling class seeks to maintain its hegemony by all available means, and knowledge is one such means. The connection between knowledge (*savior*) and power is thus made manifest, although this in no way interdicts a critical and subversive form of knowledge (*connaissance*); on the contrary, it points up the antagonism between a knowledge which serves power and a form of knowing which refuses to acknowledge power. (*The Production of Space* 367)

Within a certain space, the key to discerning the side implementing hegemony is to tell which side is taking the central position. As is mentioned above, spatial practice ensures some degree of cohesion which implies that every space has a center as well as peripheral positions. Usually, the center of a space is where the amount of power, wealth, knowledge and so on is largest. Zhao concluded the six functions of capitalist spaces. "Space is a means of production; space can be used and create surplus value; space can be consumed; space is a political tool; there is class struggle in *The Production of Space*; space is an ideological force" (Zhao, 2011). He also pointed out the relationship between spatial positions and status. "Within different spaces, subject have different levels of status and value depending on the relations between their positions and central subject (power, wealth, information and so on)" (Zhao, 2011).

Back to the novel, in the "elm" space, Miss Brodie is at the center. She is much older than the girls, having much more experiences and knowledge than them without doubt. Besides, in this special classroom space – it will be called Brodie space in following discussion – she takes the role of a teacher, endowing her the greatest power. As the center, Miss Brodie establishes the representations of space, makes students take in her savior and therefore wields the classroom space as her tool to exert her ideological force. She means to entrench her power with savior, rather than educate the girls. She scolds Miss Mackay for "thrusting a lot of information into the pupil's head" and boasts her own teaching method as "a

leading out of knowledge" which is "true education as is proved by the root meaning" (*The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* 36). However, she asked Sandy to mechanically repeat "the meaning of education" right after her seemingly thought-provoking discussion about education.

Miss Brodie preaches to advocate leading out what is already there in the pupil's soul and detests thrusting information into the pupil's minds, but actually she is the one who constantly thrust knowledge established and acknowledged by herself to the Brodie set. Examples are numerous. She would make Sandy repeat her definition of "prime" and ask Rose to repeat the meaning of Hugh's words.

The interaction between Miss Brodie and her girls has nothing to do with leading out, enlightening or anything else related to education. The answers are not for communication but meaningless echoes. In such kind of classroom space, Miss Brodie cuts the relationship between the girls and their real-life experience. When limited in this Brodie space, the girls can't avoid taking in Miss Brodie's savior and suffer from her power, regarding her established knowledge as truth. They would believe Giotto to be the greatest Italian painter and take in opinions like "art comes first, and then science" (*The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* 25).

2.2. Sandy's Identity Alienation

This influence goes far beyond Miss Brodie's preferences and political ideas, affecting how the girls view themselves.

Miss Brodie has her projection for each girl. But this is based on her arbitrary judgment and has nothing to do with their individual natures. She asserts that "Give me a girl at an impressionable age, and she is mine for life" (*The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* 9). Miss Brodie refuses to teach students in accordance with their aptitude and intends to make out of them what she wants them to be, and this always goes against the students' individual will. She means to make each one of the Brodie set "the *crème de la crème*", but dauntingly, the Brodie set fail her expectations later.

As Lv Hongling has concluded, "The swimmer Eunice became a nurse, the sexy Rose married shortly after graduation, the quiet Mary became a shorthand typist and later died in fire, the beautiful Jenny went to drama school, Monica who was good at arithmetic married a scientist, and Sandy, famous for small eyes and vowel sounds, betrayed her to become a nun. Miss Brodie, who was always claiming to be 'in her prime', ended her teaching career way early and died in frustration due to betrayal" (*A Study of Contemporary Scottish Novels* 153).

The reason is that when the Brodie set are in the classroom space dominated by Miss Brodie, they can only accept the identities that Miss Brodie imposes on them, but once they get the chance to escape, they would "shake off Miss Brodie's influence as a dog shakes off pond-water from its coat" as Rose would do (*The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* 119). Monumentality of spaces can to some extent explain the girls' passive attitude towards Miss Brodie's arbitrary projection for the set.

For millennia, monumentality took in all the aspects of *spatiality* that we have identified above... Monumental space offered each member of a society an image of that membership, an image of his or her social visage. It thus constituted a collective mirror more faithful than any personal one. Such a 'recognition effect' has far great import than the 'mirror effect' of the psychoanalysts... The monument thus effected a 'consensus', and this in the strongest sense of the

term, rendering it practical and concrete. (*The Production of Space* 220)

“Under the conditions of a generally accepted Power and a generally accepted Knowledge” (*The Production of Space* 220), Brodie space forces a “consensus” derived from Miss Brodie on each one of the set out of its characteristic of monumentality. This consensus has been reiterated by Miss Brodie’s oracular comments on the girls as well as repeating descriptions of the girls’ respective features in the novel. Take Rose Stanley and Sandy Stranger as examples.

There are many descriptions in the novel underlining Rose’s fame for sex.

Rose Stanley was famous for sex. (*The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* 7)

By her side walked Rose Stanley, tall and blonde with a yellow-pale skin, who had not yet won her reputation for sex, ... (28)

Miss Brodie had also praised Rose’s instinct many times.

As Miss Brodie was to say, she had instinct. (*The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* 55)

‘Rose,’ said Miss Brodie, ‘is like a heroine from a novel by D. H. Lawrence. She has got instinct.’ (110)

Within Brodie space, Rose’s image has been a sexy girl. This image has been such a self-evident truth that as the narrator Sandy strongly emphasizes Rose’s sex-appeal when recalling the past.

In the case of Sandy, she has got an image different from Rose. She was famous for vowel sounds and insights according to Miss Brodie.

She ... was famous for her vowel sounds which, long ago in the long past, in the Junior school, had enraptured Miss Brodie. ‘Well, come and recite for us please, because it has been a tiring day.’ (*The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* 7)

‘... Sandy, come and read some stanzas and let us hear your vowel sounds.’ (22)

‘Do you know, Sandy dear, all my ambitions are for you and Rose. You have got insight, perhaps not quite spiritual, but you’re a deep one.’ (107)

It was plain that Miss Brodie wanted ... Sandy with her insight to act as an informant on the affair. (109)

Sandy’s image has been a girl famous for vowel sounds and insight.

However, both Sandy’s and Rose’s identity images are established by Miss Brodie. Put in other words, Miss Brodie picks out features favored by her and pushes the girls to be what they ought to be within Brodie space. With the consensus and presupposed images, the girls can no longer obtain comprehensive knowledge about themselves. They have been carved into “monuments” in the Brodie space established by Miss Brodie and serve Miss Brodie to entrench her hegemony. This is “a transformation, however, which serves what religion, (political) power, and knowledge have in common” (*The Production of Space* 221). “The affective level – which is to say, the level of the body, bound to symmetries and rhythms – is transformed into a ‘property’ of monumental space, into symbols which are generally intrinsic parts of a political religious whole, into co-ordinated symbols” (224). In this monumental space, girls set in peripheral positions lose their subjectivity and become the property that can be manipulated and utilized by the central Miss Brodie. And that is why Miss Brodie would naturally consult the set about a new plot which is afoot to force her to resign despite Jenny’s activity in the Dramatic Society and later even chooses Rose to seduce Mr. Lloyd for her. And sometimes she

wields her power even without words, the influence permeating.

The sound of Miss Brodie’s presence, just when it was on the tip of Sandy’s tongue to be nice to Mary Macgregor, arrested the urge. Sandy looked back at her companion, and understood them as a body with Miss Brodie for the head. She perceived herself, the absent Jenny, the ever-blamed Mary, Rose, Eunice, and Monica, all in a frightening little moment, in unified compliance to the destiny of Miss Brodie, as if God had willed them to birth for that purpose. (*The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* 30)

Sandy feels frightened for her awareness of being body parts manipulated by “the head”. Within this space, there is a consensus that Mary is “officially the faulty one” and Sandy dares not break this invisible rule. Miss Brodie’s power endowed by space shapes Sandy and her relationships with others, which goes against her personal will. Her natural original identity has been covered up by that established by Miss Brodie, make her feel caught between her natural instinct and her love and respect for Miss Brodie. This crisis finally leads to Sandy’s identity alienation.

3. Changes in Spaces

Back to the description of the girls’ future, the key to shaking off Miss Brodie’s influence is still the space. Space is not only the cause of their identity alienation but also the guide helping Sandy recognize “Miss Brodie’s defective sense of self-criticism” (*The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* 86)

Established by Miss Brodie, savior stipulates what they are. With time passing by and Sandy growing up, she inevitably outgrows Miss Brodie’s savior and steps out of the Brodie space. That is when she gets the chance to know about the world through her real-life experiences instead of others’ preaching. She accumulates *connaissance* about the spaces that had once been deprived of her, regaining her subjectivity that had once been suppressed by Miss Brodie. New knowledge about the Edinburgh and herself frees her from the identity set by Miss Brodie and pushes her to question and to revolt power.

3.1. Interpenetrating Social Spaces

According to Lefebvre, “Social spaces interpenetrate one another and/or superimpose themselves upon one another” (*The Production of Space* 86-87). Different from actual things, social spaces don’t have mutually limiting boundaries and won’t collide with each other because of their contours or as a result of inertia. It is unsafe to assimilate space to things with metaphors such as figurative terms, “sheet” or “stratum”. Such metaphorical rather than conceptual descriptions regard walls, fence or doors as actual boundaries for conceptual social spaces, which effaces their ambiguous continuity. That is, different social spaces superimpose each other at the same time.

The same is true of social spaces in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*. Before, the discussion mainly focuses on the classroom space under the big elm dominated by Miss Brodie, but actually there are other social spaces existing at the same time. Since there is no specific boundary, Brodie space can’t exclude itself from them. They can contain, or be contained by, or parallel Brodie space. For instance, when the Brodie set are receiving Miss Brodie’s lectures under the elm, the classroom space is inside the relatively larger space of Marcia Blaine School, and the latter inside the New Town and outside the Old Town. Furthermore, both the New Town and the Old

Town areas are inside the Edinburgh space.

On the other hand, inside the Brodie's space, there are also many spaces of similar or smaller sizes which overlap Brodie space. These spaces can be family space, or even mental spaces. Lefebvre points out the "logical coherence, practical consistency, self-regulation and the relations of the parts to the whole" within mental spaces, concluding that the idea of space has long been absent from fundamental epistemological studies despite "the fact that 'space' is mentioned on every page" (*The Production of Space* 3). With this, mental spaces are also acknowledged as one type of social spaces, and several typical mental spaces are listed: "literary space, ideological spaces, the space of the dream, psychoanalytic topologies, and so on and so forth" (3), therefore the spectrum of social spaces touches the psychological facet. In this novel, the smaller spaces are Sandy's mental spaces, manifested by her fantasies and writing practices.

Sandy declares that she "was never bored, but she had to lead a double life of her own in order never to be bored" (*The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* 21). Her double life has been a heated topic among scholars and is mostly regarded as continuity of traditional Scottish duality, which joins in notion of "the traditional Scottish feature of dissociating personality and belief in ancient dark power" in *Scottish Literature: in English and Scots*.

Space theory offers a different way to explain duality in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*. Characters' double life not only echoes the Scottish tradition but also suggests the fact that they are experiencing more than one spaces at the same time. In the novel, Sandy's double life means that apart from the real life where she is inside Brodie space, she creates and experiences her own mental spaces through social activities, fantasies and writing practices. There is logical coherence, practical consistency, self-regulation and the relations of the parts to the whole in mental spaces.

The co-existence of different spaces offers Sandy a way out. "The principle of the interpenetration and superimposition of social spaces has one very helpful result, for it means that each fragment of space subjected to analysis masks not just one social relationship but a host of them that, analysis can potentially disclose" (*The Production of Space* 88). When analysis of one subject in a certain space is carried out, only one social relationship is shed light on. The fact that the subject is within many other spaces and social relationships is inevitably ignored. Fortunately, those spaces ignored can be disclosed again with corresponding analysis, as well as the relationships within them.

In the case of Sandy, she exists in many other spaces apart from Brodie space, but when Brodie space is under analysis, Sandy's position and social relations in other social spaces have been masked. When Sandy gradually realizes the existence of other social spaces as she grows up and experiences more, she gets to shake off Miss Brodie's influence and tries to construct her own identity.

3.2. Outer Spaces: Long Walk in Edinburgh

Generally, there are two directions when Sandy seeks other spaces, outward and inward. Seeking outward spaces means exploring spaces that are larger than or outside Brodie space, while seeking inward spaces means pondering over spaces that are smaller or inside Brodie space. The outward exploration is best represented by the long walk in Edinburgh.

They approached the Old Town which none of the girls had properly seen before, because none of their parents was so

historically minded as to be moved to conduct their young into the reeking network of slums which the Old Town constituted in those years. The Canongate, The Grassmarket, The Lawnmarket, were names which betokened a misty region of crime and desperation: 'Lawn-market Man Jailed.'

... It was Sandy's first experience of a foreign country, which intimates itself by its new smells and shapes and its new poor. A man sat on the icy-cold pavement; he just sat. A crowd of children, some without shoes, were playing some fight game, and some boys shouted after Miss Brodie's violet-clad company, with words that the girls had not heard before, but rightly understood to be obscene. (*The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* 32-33)

There, the Brodie set saw the reeking slums and heard obscene words. As Sandy said, she was "frightened by the squalor" (*The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* 34). Before, as a student in Marcia Blaine School, Sandy was leading an upper-class life without realizing it. Her life has been limited to one part of Edinburgh space but she mistakenly regarded the upper-class part of Edinburgh as the whole and real Edinburgh. And that is why later "many times throughout her life Sandy knew with a shock, when speaking to people whose childhood had been in Edinburgh, that there were other people's Edinburghs quite different from hers, and with which she held only the names of districts and streets and monuments in common" (33). In the following texts, Sandy again brings up that she has been deprived of "some quality of life peculiar to Edinburgh" as well as the religion of Calvin (108).

With some "enlightened people" like parents protecting Sandy from the other part of Edinburgh space, Sandy has to be unable to realize the existence of the whole Edinburgh space. With the long walk as well as her visit to St. Giles Cathedral or the Tolbooth, she for the first time gets to know the city space and religion space outside the space she is now experiencing. Savior takes the form of ignorance and blankness. Enlightened people's silence about the next part of Edinburgh denotes their ideas of it and also contributes to the construction of representations of the space that they put Sandy in. Again, Sandy feels the astonishing power of space when she finally gets to others' Edinburgh. With the long walk, she for the first time obtains a general look at Edinburgh through her own eyes rather than some enlightened man's mouth. She accumulates her own *connaissance*, which helps her escape from the fraud of savior.

Besides, with the changes of spaces come the changes in position. As a student with less knowledge, Sandy takes the peripheral position in the classroom space and serves to be the property of Brodie space. As a girl from a normal family, Sandy and her family take a normal position in the space of upper-class Edinburgh residents. But when placed in the whole Edinburgh space, Sandy, as a stranger, for the first time gets to shake off the image or identity as well as relationships that have been long imposed on her, allowing her a temporary respite from her past life. She takes many different angles when viewing this new space.

She can be inside of this space. With wealth much more than that of residents in slums, she takes a relatively central position in it. Staring at the strangers in this new space allows Sandy to look at and reflect from a different perspective upon her own identity as well as the nature of Miss Brodie – her small photographing eyes are her aid, and now the way she considers Miss Brodie has changed.

"The more carefully one examines space, considering it not

only with the eyes, not only with the intellect, but also with all the senses, with the total body, the more clearly one becomes aware of the conflicts at work within it, conflicts which foster the explosion of abstract space and the production of a space that is *other*" (*The Production of Space* 391). Sandy's *connaissance* makes her aware of the fallacy and inadequacy of savior, and she manages to examine different spaces and finds the conflicts at work in them. Before, Sandy worshipped Miss Brodie as Joan of Arc. Later, she looks at Miss Brodie and finds a New Miss Brodie who would make mistakes.

On the other hand, Sandy is also an onlooker. To Sandy, Girl Guides offer a new space which serves as a counterpart of the Brodie set, enabling Sandy to look at the Girl Guides as well as the Brodie set from a third view, get some certain insightful idea, and detect "inconsistency" or "fault" in the Brodie space. "Miss Brodie's disapproval of the Girl Guides had jealousy in it" because "the Guides were too much of a rival fascisti, and Miss Brodie could not bear it" (*The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* 31-32). Through outer space exploration, Sandy accumulates *connaissance* which refuses to acknowledge Miss Brodie's power.

3.3. Inner Spaces: Fantasies and Writing Practices

Sandy protects herself from Miss Brodie's intrusive preaching by preserving her inner spaces. Sandy's mental spaces are constructed mainly through activities like fantasies and writing practices. Through the preservation of mental spaces, Sandy relieves the identity anxiety led by social spaces, mainly Brodie space, so as to construct representations of her own. She pretends to be "a married lady having an argument with her husband" (*The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* 31) and Alan Breck's companion in an adventure.

The pretexts count. Sandy's fantasies sometimes appear when she feels tough in the real space. She doesn't know how to make it between her own wish and the invisible rules of the Brodie set which always regard Mary as blamable, so she means to be someone else to suspend this torture. She was caught between her fright to the Guides and her love for Miss Brodie who is doing similar things as the Guides, so she decides to be mentally away for a while. Again, with her eyes, Sandy detects the conflicts in Brodie space. Under such circumstances, she sometimes withdraws back to her own mental spaces to relieve her identity anxiety where she is the center and can set representations of spaces.

There are also many fantasies which don't follow Sandy's fright.

'By what means did your Ladyship write these words?' Sandy inquired in her mind with her lips shut tight.

'There was a pot of white paint and a brush which happened to be standing upon the grassy verge,' replied the Lady of Shalott graciously. 'It was left there no doubt by some heedless member of the Unemployed.' (*The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* 21)

Such fantasies are not to comfort her frightened self, but to ease her boredom. Just as Sandy has said, she "had to lead a double life of her own in order never to be bored". Here in this example, in Brodie space that Sandy is actually experiencing, Miss Brodie is talking about a poem. The real space is full of this boring poem and Miss Brodie's boring explanation, and Sandy feels that her mental needs are not met by savior, so she has fantasies to amuse herself. She constructs another mental space to protect herself against boring Miss

Brodie's intrusion.

Simultaneously, Sandy's writing practices also create mental spaces. She rewrites the love story between Hugh and Miss Brodie and names it "The Mountain Eyrie". This writing practice also creates a space where Miss Brodie is not the preaching side but the side being examined. Within this mental space, Miss Brodie becomes the property of this space, serving Sandy's mental needs, while Sandy, as the author who has the right to determine the destiny of characters, is at the center. This change in positions also enlightens her to re-examine Miss Brodie's behavior as well as the conflicts in her space.

4. Resistance and Identity Construction

With space exploration in two directions, Sandy's resistance to Miss Brodie's hegemony has never stopped. This resistance is mostly represented by Sandy's betrayal and the disappearance of Brodie space. First, she has been misleading Miss Brodie about her consideration about Rose and becomes Mr. Lloyd's lover. Second, she suggests Miss Mackay to defeat Miss Brodie with political problems. These are the results of her resistance. What is mostly important about the resistance is the disappearance of Brodie space. Gradually, with the Brodie girls becoming senior students, Miss Brodie's central position has been threatened. On Saturday afternoons, Miss Brodie spent an hour on her Greek lessons, "for she had insisted that Jenny and Sandy should teach her Greek at the same time as they learned it" (*The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* 81). She can only learn about Mr. Lloyd and his studio from Sandy. Something is changing in Brodie space. Now it is Sandy rather than Miss Brodie who establishes representations while the latter loses connection with reality and has to take in Sandy's savior.

On the other side, there is a physical distance between Miss Brodie and her girls, so the continuity of Brodie space is in danger. She "had a hard fight of it during those first few months when the Senior school had captivated her set, displaying as did the set that capacity for enthusiasm which she herself had implanted" (*The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* 83). Miss Brodie struggles to continue her influence along with her space, but this disappearance is irrevocable since after graduation, they seldom gather all together to carry out spatial practices such as teaching as they used to. Spaces don't exist without certain social activities.

With the gradual disappearance of Brodie space, Sandy, from the peripheral position in Brodie space, being influenced and shaped, to an individual free from the image set by Miss Brodie, completes her resistance. And finally, she embodies her triumph in her betrayal.

Still, it is hard to tell whether Sandy had constructed her own identity. Many years later, Sandy Stranger, a Brodie girl, becomes Sister Helena, a nun in the Transfiguration. This new religion space and Sister Helena's situation within it also deserve analysis. In the Transfiguration, there is the grille, "the dim parlour" and "other nuns who sat, when they received their rare visitors, well back in the darkness with folded hands" (*The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* 35). When Sandy receives visitors, she sits with the visitor face to face with the grille bars resting in between which to some extent mark the ambiguous boundary separating the religious space with the outer profane space. Similar to Brodie space, there are many representations, established knowledge and savior

here, too. A nun should reside in the darkness. A nun should expect no visitors. A nun should sit silently with their hands folded. But something else has changed. Sister Helena is different from the Brodie girl in that the former won't resign to the representations and accept the image that is ready for her.

There is a mismatch between representations and Sandy's representational spaces which mean the life that she is actually experiencing. The Rule allows no visitor for nuns, "but a special dispensation was enforced on Sandy because of her Treatise" (*The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* 33), and instead of residing in the darkness silently, she often "clutched the bars of the grille as if she wanted to escape from the dim parlour beyond, for she was not composed like the other nuns" (35). After experiencing her peripheral position in Brodie space, Sandy is again far away from the space center and against the established representations. Besides, throughout the novel, we get little description of Sister Helena's communication with other nuns or religious figures. Even as a nun, Sandy mainly talked with the Brodie set and outside visitors. The proportion of descriptions of such communication serves as strong evidence. Sandy is also far away from the center of social relations in this religion space.

Her peripheral position may suggest that she is not content with the identity as a nun. As Derek Stanford put, the so-called conversion is not true and Sister Helena is still unsatisfied at heart. This doesn't mean that Sandy wants to go back to her past life. Being a nun suggests her triumph over Miss Brodie. In the past, Miss Brodie disapproved of the Church of Roman because she believes that "it was a church of superstition, and that only people who did not want to think for themselves were Roman Catholics" (*The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* 85). Her biased ideas constructed the savior which was once borne hard in Sandy's mind, thus disapproval of Roman Catholic has also been part of Sandy's image. Now she outgrows the savior and chooses to gain knowledge about Roman Catholic with her actual experiences, which can be defined as *connaissance*. Therefore, this is a betrayal conduct that she would never regret. Being a nun represents a negation of Miss Brodie's false idea. Benilde Montgomery said, "Reacting against and rejecting the authoritarianism of Miss Brodie's fascism, Sandy Stranger enters the Catholic Church and thereby embraces another kind of authority, an authority grounded not in personal power but in a dynamic tradition that, Newman contends, does not tyrannize but rather provokes, in its "never-ending duel" with "private judgement," the warfare that is the necessary condition for the very life of religion" (Montgomery 104-105).

If the identity construction of Sandy Stranger is compared to a gap filling question, then before Miss Brodie has put an unpleasant answer in it, and Sandy's betrayal is to erase Miss Brodie's version and put in a different answer. It is actually an attempt to explore a totally different new space instead of a final choice. Look back at Sandy's intention, and it would be found that what stimulates her to be a nun is her interest in Mr. Lloyd's mind, "from which she extracted, among other things, his religion as a pith from a husk". "Her mind was as full of his religion as a night sky is full of things visible and invisible. She left the man and took his religion and became a nun in the course of time" (*The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* 123). Her conversion is not based on her firm belief in God but is out of her interest in exploring another unknown space.

Based on the text, maybe being a nun is still not the right answer for her gap filling question, but she gets to learn more

about herself. With respect to her identity construction, she hasn't figured it out, but at least she has gotten progress. She once conducted negation to Miss Brodie, but she is still a woman at her middle age and has so many possibilities, so her next negation can be expected. After all, her name, Sandy, as Velma Bourgeois Richmond has put, this name suggests not only the uncertainty of changes but also the distance between her and all other people (*Muriel Spark* 26).

We are all wondering which space the sand would flow to and what shape it will be, but after all there may not be such a terminus for the flowing sand just like there may not exist a correct final answer to Sandy's gap filling question about her identity. Her refusal to savior and gradual accumulation of *connaissance* count most, and meaning lies not in where she would settle down but in her continuous exploration of spaces.

5. Conclusion

Space, as the production of social activities, inevitably carries man's ideological power rather than serve as a passive locus. "Space is not a scientific object removed from ideology or politics; it has always been political and strategic" (Lefebvre 31). The dominating side establishes representations and cut the link between the dominated side and representational spaces, pouring savior to entrench its hegemony. Spark demonstrates Miss Brodie's hegemony, which serves as a vivid proof for the active role played by space in the formation of autocracy.

On the other hand, changes in spaces frees the dominated side from the "consensus" and *connaissance* gathered through actual experiences breaks the peaceful mirage which serves to efface natural subjectivity and to snuff the spark of revolt. Sandy finally succeeds in shaking off Miss Brodie's influence and completes her revenge. This shows Spark's care for the suffering side in face of hypocrisy, autocracy, ignorance and arrogance in the special geographical space of Edinburgh. With the description of Sandy's change in identity, she points out a tough but promising way for the strugglers and holds a positive attitude towards their future.

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